

pt02



August 29, 2001

Senator Jim Baumgart  
Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

RE Senate Bill 219

Senator Baumgart and Environmental Resource Committee:

I would like to go on record in opposition to SB #219.

I am a business property owner with a billboard on my property. This billboard is a means for me to generate business and keep the company in a viable position. If this pending bill passes, it will not only be a negative force in generating business, but would then indirectly affect over-all taxes for the State of Wisconsin.

I certainly understand your concern over the issue of billboards, but would greatly appreciate you taking into consideration the many other issues that will be extremely detrimental to the many businesses who count on this form of advertising.

I hope you will consider my opinions, and I urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Badger Truck Center, Inc.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Schlagenhauf".

Paul Schlagenhauf  
President



Badger Truck Center, Inc. • 2326 West St. Paul Avenue • P.O. Box 1530 • Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1530  
414-344-9500 • Wisconsin 800-242-8752 • National 800-537-7183 • Fax 414-344-4323 • [www.badgertruck.com](http://www.badgertruck.com)

7525 Oakhill Ave.  
Wauwatosa WI 53213  
August 20, 2001

**Presentation to the Senate Environmental Resources Committee**  
Madison WI August 30th

My name is Chuck Mitchell. I'm a mechanical engineer and I run a small sales agency in Wauwatosa. I am also president of *Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin*.

In the course of my work as a sales engineer, and in driving to our lake home in Eagle River, I have traveled by highway over a large portion of the state of Wisconsin. I have come to realize how beautiful our state is: fields and forests, lakes and rivers, farms with barns and silos, cities and towns with traditional older buildings and good new architecture, fine new housing developments... There are opportunities for outdoor recreation of all kinds and opportunities to be gainfully employed in a solid industrial base. It's a great place to live and to work. I love Wisconsin.

As you mature, you realize the importance of the natural beauty of the land and of the appearance of your city or town. You understand how important those things are to your enjoyment of life. That's the reason I was one of the founders of *Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin*. CSW is dedicated to protecting our landscapes and the character of our cities and towns. When you get involved in preserving scenery, however, you discover that billboards along the highways are damaging the appearance of our state.

Let's take a minute to look at a few **slides** and you will see what I mean. (Talk about the scenes in the slides.)

Increasing numbers of billboards are degrading the scenery or ruining the view everywhere. Billboards have become more and more intrusive, many of them on tall steel posts soaring over treetops. Such large visual obstructions rob the driver of pleasant scenery that makes a trip enjoyable, and they dull the impression that a first-time visitor gets of Wisconsin.

Large off-premise signs are a nuisance not only because they disturb the surroundings, but also because they are unavoidable commercial solicitations in your face as you drive. When you get a nuisance phone call, you can hang up immediately and ask them not to call again. With the billboard, you are forced to see it for many seconds. And you get a dose of it every time you drive by, often daily on your way to work. The advertiser gets his message to first-time passers-by, but the unfortunate local residents who become well aware of the advertiser must endure repeated encounters with the sign.

Billboards are increasing at an alarming rate in Wisconsin. At 400 a year just in the countryside, the number of billboards will more than double in your lifetime. Plus there are plenty going up in the cities. And they are larger and taller each year.

Does our society need to devote every possible square foot of the outdoors to sell our products? Are we so desperate to gain advantage on our competitors? I don't think so. I think we are ready to declare peace and call a halt to the proliferation of billboards.

Let me pause for a moment to quote William F. Buckley. As you probably know, Buckley is one of the most prominent political thinkers of our time. You probably *don't* know he has written several articles about outdoor advertising. In an article in the *National Review* entitled *Cutting the Noisemaker*, July 31 2000, he says "Not enough people are saying what they ought to say, namely that outdoor advertising is an act of aggression against which the public is entitled as a matter of privacy to be protected. We should be free to look about the countryside at hills and forests and mountains without being enjoined, simultaneously, to drink Coca-Cola."

So I'm going to say what I ought to say and that is: **I support Senator Baumgart's billboard control bill #219.** Its main intent is to stop construction of any new billboards and that's good for Wisconsin. There is no cost to the taxpayers.

Let me give you some reasons:

There are enough billboards out there and a big portion of them, 60 to 70% of them according to a recent study, advertise products or services that are of no immediate help to a traveler, the largest single product being "automobiles". Other categories are "retail", "media", "insurance & real estate" and "financial". This is according to an article in the October 2000 issue of *Signs of the Times*, an outdoor advertising trade magazine. You can only determine a range of percentage because of a category of products and services called "other" in the article, but it indicates that only 30 to 40% of the signs advertise travel-related goods or services such as food, lodging and gas. If Baumgart's bill goes into effect, travel-related business will still have the opportunity to compete for the available signs. Very little will change, but further degradation of the land will be prevented and the traveling public will be spared additional visual harassment.

Some people will say that outdoor advertising is necessary to a healthy economy, but when did you ever hear a respected economist express a *need* for billboards? Have you ever heard an economist warn us that we need plenty of big signs in the countryside to avoid a recession? No. That's because a sign helps only the company that advertises on it, and it works *against* competing companies. Signs do little to create basic demand – they are only a weapon in the battle for customers.

They will tell you that there is a big demand for signs. But there is a demand for signs only if your competitor has a sign and your company needs one to compete. It's like

people standing up at a concert to see the performers better. As more people in the audience stand up, everyone else *has* to stand up to see. If everyone remains seated, they can all see, and they can all relax.

There are plenty of substitutes for billboards: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and the internet are available to create demand for products, services and destinations. Even travel-related businesses create demand using these media. Roadside signs come into play only after the tourist reaches his recreational area.

The concept of prohibiting billboards is not new. There are five states that have statewide billboard prohibition: Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island, Alaska and Hawaii. All but RI have taken down all billboards over a period of years. That's right, **there are no billboards in those states.** I've been there, seen it and appreciated it. And those states depend on tourism to a greater than average degree. They remain prosperous, and tourism businesses thrive. A study done in Vermont shows that the tourism industry has benefited from a steady stream of tourists who return year after year to enjoy the scenery. So there is no danger that not allowing new billboards will hurt tourism.

I am pro-business and pro-tourism. I am a businessman myself. I own and manage a small sales agency. I understand the pressures of making sales to generate income and meeting the payroll every month. I understand that signs do aid individual companies, but too many of them ruining landscape is not good for tourist-oriented businesses. The special landscape of any region is a major attraction of tourists.

Bill 219 is formulated to have a minimum impact on the outdoor advertising industry. The industry will continue to operate and profit from existing signs. Demand for other advertising media such as those mentioned will increase.

We are in favor of increased use of small, tasteful "tourist oriented directional signs", T. O. D. S. or "Tods". These are placed near the road in the public right-of-way along state and county highways. Wisconsin already has laws on the books to govern Tods. Tods are widely used in Vermont & Maine. We are also in favor of increased use of logo signs that indicate food, fuel and lodging at freeway exits.

In closing, I would summarize:

**Let's not lose sight of Wisconsin.**

**Free enterprise does not have to be ugly.**

**Let's work together to preserve one of our most precious resources: our scenery.**

Chuck Mitchell

AUG 30 2001

7725 Sweeney Road  
Barneveld, WI 53507  
August 27, 2001

State Senator Schultz  
P. O. Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53708 - 8952

Dear Senator Schultz:

On Thursday, your Environmental Resources Committee ~~will be~~ holding a hearing on Senate Bill 219. A previous commitment may pre me from attending, so please accept this letter in lieu of a personal appearance.

While I find many billboards depressing, the very worst ones are those that are sprouting so rapidly in the very scenery that entices tourists into Wisconsin. I regularly travel the Interstate between Mauston and the Dells, and there is a recent proliferation of signs along this stretch of highway. They are placed to take advantage of natural beauty, and as a result are especially obnoxious.

Tourists don't choose a road to look at monstrous billboards. They choose a road because they want to see the scenery en route to their destination.

Tourists don't need billboards to find out what businesses are available to them -- they usually are prepared with that information in advance, or can find it in many other, less intrusive ways.

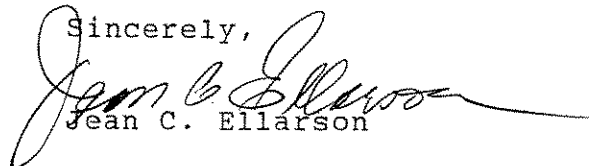
The degradation of our natural resources caused by billboards can actually discourage tourists, and send them elsewhere.

As an example, my husband and I took a long-planned trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Illinois and Indiana were a prelude to the mountainous scenery we expected in Kentucky and Tennessee. What a disappointment to see those mountains desecrated by enormous billboards, blatantly plastered in front of the most beautiful views. We made a list of the advertisers and avoided them like the plague, and then found an alternative route home.

God gave us a state of extraordinary beauty. If we protect it we will be richer, both in environment and in money. Giving it to crass business interests who desecrate it is selling our birthright for a mess of pottage. Way back in Sunday School we all learned that that was wrong.

Please support Senate Bill 219. This bill will actually be good for business.

Sincerely,

  
Jean C. Ellarson

Senator Dale Schultz -- page 2

P. S. If you respond to this letter, please do not tell me how we have to be so nice to business and industry. My individual state taxes are already the highest in the nation and those businesses pay the lowest taxes in the nation. Do they also need a pound of flesh?

cc: Sens Baumgart ✓  
Hansen  
Wirsch  
Cowles

J.C.E.  
*J.C.E.*

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**MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FOREST PRODUCTS, INC.**

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Plant Office  
608-568-7290  
608-568-3884 Fax

P.O. Box 631  
Dickeyville, WI 53808-0631

**Statement of David Hartig, President/CEO  
Mississippi Valley Forest Products, Inc  
in support of SB 219  
before the  
Wisconsin Senate Environmental Resources Committee  
August 30, 2001.**

Senators:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before your committee today.

My name is David Hartig and I am a manufacturer from Grant County. I am President and CEO of Mississippi Valley Forest Products, Inc. We manufacture and distribute quality treated wood and steel products for agricultural and roadway construction. Using the resources of several thousand acres of our own renewable timberlands, together with the labor of several hundred employees and suppliers, our Company's trucks transport hundreds of loads of finished steel and timber products to retailers throughout the State each year. My comments today reflect a business approach to the subject at hand, as well as my concern for the environment.

I am here today to testify in favor of SB219. Let me stress that again: I favor additional regulation and limitations on the billboard industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen. I Believe the State of Wisconsin and its citizens have been and are continuing to be financially and environmentally short-changed, abused and taken advantage of by a parasitic billboard industry.

How did we allow this to happen?

Times change-----Up until the mid 70's, the demand for many services and manufactured goods in the United States exceeded the supply, so advertising was less of a factor then than it is now. During the past 25 years, goods and services have generally become so plentiful that there are often more goods available than demand would require. Finding themselves with excess goods to sell, many suppliers have chosen to advertise increasingly aggressively. Many would suggest that we have come to a place where we market and advertise excessively.

Unquestioned is the right of free speech and the constant need for economic development inherent to our way of life in the United States. I do feel, however, that government has been unaware of the full ramifications of unbridled outdoor advertising. The Industry grew far faster than reasonable government oversight and regulation could respond.

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*Manufacturers and Distributors of Quality Treated Wood  
and Steel Products for Agricultural and Roadway Construction*

Today, the Industry is so wealthy and powerful that many have said reasonable regulation is no longer possible.

Senators, you have the opportunity today to provide reasonable oversight and regulation. The public is entitled to a reduction in the Statewide visual pollution caused by excess outdoor advertising and to the correction of a gross financial inequity. Others have said that with the onset of cellular, satellite, and on-line communication, potentially every vehicle on the public roadways will soon be so equipped so as to altogether significantly reduce the need for billboard advertising and so portends its inevitable decline. Billboards will be marginalized by the marketing that reaches drivers electronically.

The difficulty is, however, the question of what is going to happen to out-dated, unused billboard structures built to last 100 years? At present, the D.O.T. seems not to have the funds or does not allocate the funds to acquire and then remove even an unused \$200 wooden framework from which a billboard has been removed.

I would like to suggest a two-step approach to help mitigate the visual pollution of our beautiful state while concurrently providing sufficient funds to the D.O.T. to provide Wisconsin residents and tourists with the unspoiled scenic beauty to which they are entitled.

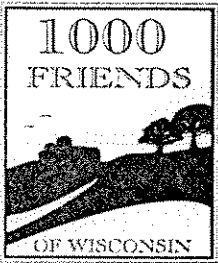
First: Do not permit any additional billboard structures to be built, thus allowing time to craft a comprehensive approach to the regulation of this changing Industry.

Second: Collect fair and reasonable use taxes from each highway billboard. I urge you to think of billboards as highway users. My trucks pay 8-10% of their gross revenues in highway use taxes. Why doesn't the Billboard Industry pay <sup>reasonable</sup> permitting fees when, in fact, they too are using the highway? Face a billboard away from the highway and it becomes as worthless as a muddy road to my semis. If I pay 8-10% of my truck revenue in highway taxes, the billboard industry should pay a comparable fair share of its gross revenues to the D.O.T. for its visual access to highway rights of way. The billboard industry's "fair share" has been estimated as having the potential to provide the D.O.T. with an additional 5-8 million dollars in annual receipts. This new revenue should be earmarked for direct use by the D.O.T. to a) oversee the billboard industry as is now done with trucks; (currently, the D.O.T. knows how much tread is left on the left rear, outside tire of our trailer #21, but they don't even have an accurate count of the actual number of billboard structures throughout the State. This disparity of regulation is unconscionable.) b) Remove unused and non-conforming billboard structures, and c) maintain and enhance the scenic vistas along our roads and highways so as to make each citizen proud of the beauty of the State and to attract visitors from other places who come to Wisconsin and benefit our economy.

Senators: I believe the bill before you encompasses the basic ideas which I have put forth today, and I urge you and your colleagues to move this long overdue legislation forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.





## Testimony on Senate Bill 219

By Lisa M. MacKinnon

Attorney

1000 Friends of Wisconsin

August 30, 2001

### Board of Directors

Senator Gaylord Nelson,  
Emeritus Chair

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### 1000 Friends Land Use Institute

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Brian Ohm, Madison  
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Bryan Pierce, Eagle River  
Karen Raymore, Sturgeon Bay  
Glenn Reynolds, Primrose  
Jay Tappen, Eau Claire  
Kine Torinus, West Bend  
Kim Verhein, Waukesha  
Marcus White, Milwaukee  
Meagan Yost, Poynette

Two weeks ago I took a visitor from California camping in the Bayfield area. She was unaware of SB-219 and 1000 Friends of Wisconsin's support for it. As we drove down the road somewhere near Washburn she turned to me and said, "This is so beautiful. Do they put restrictions on billboards up here?" Not only did she see a connection between scenic beauty and the absence of billboards, her experience of Wisconsin was so enhanced by their absence that she felt it was remarkable. As a matter of fact, Bayfield County *does* have a long-standing sign ordinance that restricts the square footage, height and distance between billboards. Neighboring counties and local governments across the state, however, do not and the difference is clearly noticeable.

Even those who directly benefit from Wisconsin's tourism industry are challenging the continued use of billboards. In a recent Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article, John Torinus, the Chief Executive Officer of Serigraph Inc., a company that produces parts for recreational vehicles such as snowmobiles and ATVs stated, "the Wisconsin tourism industry needs to take a hard look at what it is doing to itself." Torinus pointed out, "the tourism people in some parts of the world have come to the conclusion that their bread is better buttered by protecting the scenic beauty than by developing it."

In Wisconsin we spend a tremendous amount of money marketing our scenic beauty and natural resources through commercials, websites, and brochures. We beckon potential tourists both inside and outside the state with images of unspoiled wilderness, sparkling lakes, and quaint main streets. I challenge you to find a billboard in any of those glossy photos. Yet when tourists actually head down the highway in search of those destinations they are bombarded with the visual pollution of billboards that destroy scenic views, commercialize the countryside and chip away at local community character.

Senate Bill 219 would:

- Restore the uncluttered scenic beauty along Wisconsin's highways that is valuable to residents and tourists alike
- Provide a fair and balanced process for replacing large billboard advertising with specific informational signs so that tourist and motorist oriented information is still available and accessible
- Improve taxpayers' quality of life while costing them nothing

People choose to live and travel in Wisconsin because it is a beautiful, scenic state. We support SB-219 because it provides a simple and balanced approach to keeping Wisconsin beautiful for everybody.

1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Inc. & 1000 Friends Land Use Institute

16 North Carroll Street Suite 810 Madison, WI 53703

ph:608/259-1000 fx:608/259-1621 friends@1kfriends.org www.1kfriends.org



**Sandy Krause  
1525 N. 69<sup>th</sup> Street  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213**

August 30, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin

Regarding Senate Bill #219

Members of the Committee,

My name is Sandy Krause, Communications Director for the March of Dimes Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter. The March of Dimes is directly affected by this proposed legislation and I wish to go on record in opposition to Senate Bill #219. I am also on the Board of the Association for Women in Communications and as a professional communicator feel this bill is not in the best interest to business or consumers in our state. My fellow communicators share this view.

The March of Dimes depends upon communication to the public to educate on vital healthy baby messages and support our fundraising efforts. Billboards are essential to our mix of communication vehicles because they support broadcast media efforts and offer a wonderful broad-spectrum delivery.

While some people feel that signs are unattractive, there are far more people that find signs to be helpful and interesting. Ever since the days of Burma Shave road side signs have offered guidance, fun ideas and entertainment. In the case of our message, signs are essential to educate women about how to have a healthy baby. Our boards offer appealing pictures and helpful information.

I hope you will consider these things and vote against this bill.

Thank you for your time,

Sandy Krause  
1525 N. 69<sup>th</sup> Street  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Daniel G. Pomeroy  
S88 W25885 Edgewood Ave.  
Mukwonago, WI 53149

August 30, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin

Regarding Senate Bill #219

I am the Real Estate/Public Affairs Manager for Clear Channel Outdoor in Milwaukee, and also the Secretary/Treasurer of the Outdoor Advertising Association of Wisconsin. I have been involved with the outdoor advertising industry for 10 years and am proud of the industry's contribution to Wisconsin's tourism industry in particular and the state economy in general. I, and my family, are opposed to Senate Bill #219. *I'm a tourist also!*

There are issues that have been brought out about billboards that I believe need clarification, especially in light of the ramifications of Senate Bill 219 and its goals. Those issues include some background on the industry relative to government regulation, public perception of billboards, the impact of "lazy journalism" on the industry and some legal questions.

✓  
Background:

The first Federal legislation regarding signage was the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1958, commonly referred to as the "Bonus Act". The Bonus Act offered 1/2 % bonus in highway funds for states that volunteered to control outdoor advertising within 660 feet of a highway. Wisconsin was one of the 25 states which signed on, no payments have been made in a number of years and 5 states have dropped the program. A key feature of the Act as amended was to restrict construction of new signs to highway frontage that was zoned commercial in 1959; this still applies today.

The next effort was the Highway Beautification Act or HBA, which almost everyone is familiar with. This Act was introduced to "control" the construction of new signs in rural areas and provide a system of eliminating illegal and non-conforming signs via condemnation. Contrary to what some people would have you believe, and I quote "The Highway Beautification Act was never intended to completely ban billboards. It was a control measure, and the Committee on Public Works emphatically stated that outdoor advertising was a legitimate business that should be permitted where other industrial and commercial activities were conducted." Senator Jennings Randolph, October 14, 1988, Principal Senate sponsor of the original HBA proposal.

Today there are over 40 pages of DOT regulations and rules regarding the placement and maintenance of billboards. Those are layered above sign ordinances in almost every municipality in Wisconsin. Signs along interstates are prohibited unless the property was zoned commercial or industrial in 1959, over 40 years ago.

#### Public Perception:

While Citizens for Scenic Wisconsin, generally represented by two very vocal opponents of billboards spout about people being against billboards, some remarkable things have happened. In Michigan, a poll conducted by the University of Michigan found that 67% of the people contacted favored reasonable regulation of signs; less than 1/5<sup>th</sup> (19%) favored doing away with them. In St Paul, Minnesota, and in the State of Missouri public referendums to ban billboards were defeated in the last two years. Most important, here at home in Wisconsin, a survey done in 1997 found that 78% of the people surveyed found billboards helpful and useful when traveling.

*combination research*

This positive perception is only enhanced by articles in the Wall Street Journal, USA today and other publications referring to billboards as "outdoor art galleries", and other positive descriptions related to new technologies and creativity in the industry. Even "The Marketour" a publication of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism has produced a primer in their August/September 2000 edition on the use of outdoor for their subscribers. This week on Monday, the Jeff Wagner radio show (WTMJ - Milwaukee) took calls from 5 people plus Mr. Mitchell with 4 of the 5 voicing opposition to a billboard ban - that squares with University of Michigan survey results. One of the five talked about his terrible experience in Vermont and having to leave the state to find directions to a place to sleep late at night.

#### Lazy Journalism & Public Perception:

A number of articles have been written in the last few years and especially in the last few weeks that haven't helped the matter. For example, comments like "clear cutting", for billboards, cutting 300 year old oaks for billboards, the number of billboards is growing annually and will double in our lifetime, there are 20,000 billboards in Wisconsin, We (DOT) allow cutting "when it's the right thing to do". Each of these comments, printed without any effort at checking facts, asking questions or even reading the legislation is a reflection of lazy journalism - because they are all exaggerations, lies or deliberately vague.

The DOT person who coined the term "clear cutting" in place of "trimming or relocating vegetation" has admitted that it might have been too strong a phrase. There are no 300 year old oaks on the ROW the DOT already cut them down, there are no signs behind the non-existent 300 year old oaks. What does the phrase mean, "we allow cutting when it's the right thing to do"? In my experience with the DOT, that means never - don't bother applying. Finally, concerning the 20,000 billboards and proliferation to double in our lifetime. According to the Federal Highway Administration there were 39,551 signs on Federal Aid Primary Highways and Interstates in Wisconsin in 1965. By 1996 the DOT said there were 25,000 signs responding to a Scenic America Survey. According to the Wisconsin Administrative Register No. 539 last November, there were 14,617 signs less about 4,500 Community and Service Club signs - that leaves the number of billboards at

around 10,000 and falling – not exactly proliferation/doubling or whatever else you wish to call it. I don't even know why you're pursuing this bill as it doesn't appear necessary.

Legal Issues:

I am not a lawyer, but it seems to me that taxing a business to build a fund to shut that business down is a violation of due process and equal protection laws afforded us by the United States Constitution.

It singles out one industry and treats them different from any other industry.  
It is simply an illegal means of circumventing condemnation laws made to look legitimate; in my layman's opinion.

Again I ask you to vote against this Bill.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daniel Hensley", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

## HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION — FACTS OR MYTHS

### MYTH

The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 has done little or nothing to improve the aesthetic quality of our highways.

### FACT

The following statistics, based on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) sign inventory conducted in 1966, and FHWA figures released in August 1985, show that the Highway Beautification Act has done a great deal to improve the aesthetic quality of our highways.

Total Signs		Signs per Mile	
1966	1985	1966	1985
1,100,020	500,313	4.4	1.7
Nonconforming and Illegal Signs to be Removed		Signs in Commercial and Industrial Areas	
1966	1985	1966	1985
839,391	167,840	260,659	241,608*

\* Includes only commercial outdoor advertising signs.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that at least 220,000 additional signs have not been erected due to the prohibitions imposed by the Act (This figure is conservative. It could be as high as 500,000).

### MYTH

The "Billboard Lobby" has sponsored amendments which have substantially weakened the Highway Beautification Act of 1965.

### FACT

No amendment has been enacted which would permit *any* additional off-premise commercial outdoor advertising signs, other than those permitted under the 1965 Act, as originally enacted.

The outdoor advertising industry, from time to time, is the target of articles that are often erroneous and unfairly slanted against billboards. The following myths and facts generally address the issues that are typically raised by our critics. The Outdoor Advertising Association of America, Inc. has prepared this pamphlet so that interested parties may be able to review both sides of the issues.

#### MYTH

Today, billboard operators are intensifying pressure on Congress to ease Federal Government controls on outdoor advertising.

#### FACT

There is *no* pressure or lobbying by the outdoor advertising industry to ease Federal Government controls. Early in 1985, anti-billboard spokesmen stated in the press that the OAAA was behind a so-called "Freedom of Billboard Advertising Act" which had been introduced in Congress. No such bill has ever existed or even been drafted.

#### MYTH

The intent and purpose of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 is to prohibit billboards on Federally funded roads.

#### FACT

The intent is to prohibit billboards in *noncommercial, nonindustrial areas*. The Congress was explicit in permitting outdoor advertising in commercial and industrial areas, where it is compatible, in order "to promote the reasonable, orderly and effective display of outdoor advertising."

#### MYTH

The billboard industry has been using Highway Beautification Funds paid to it to build new signs.

#### FACT

This is nothing more than a smokescreen to hide the fact that the critics of the outdoor advertising industry believe that the owner of an outdoor advertising sign should not be compensated when his property is condemned by the Government. In addition, no data exists as to what use is made of proceeds from these removals.

#### MYTH

The outdoor advertising industry has grown because of loopholes in the Highway Beautification Act.

#### FACT

The industry has grown because our economy has expanded in the last 20 years. Population increased from 179 million in 1960 to 226 million in 1980. Interstate highway mileage open to traffic increased from 21,185 miles in 1965 to a current 40,936. The Federal-aid primary system has likewise grown. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of commercial and industrial areas in which outdoor advertising may be located. This quote from the *Congressional Record* of October 6, 1965, indicates that growth of the industry was anticipated and expected, by the drafters of the Act.

"With the continued growth of the Nation's economy, there will be an inevitable increase in the number of commercial and industrial areas adjacent to the Interstate and primary systems. Outdoor advertising signs could, of course, be maintained in these new areas. Therefore, the opportunities for outdoor advertising will not remain static. Obviously, we can expect these opportunities to continue to grow and expand."

#### MYTH

The public dislikes billboards and would like to do away with them.

#### FACT

In a nationwide survey conducted by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, almost two-thirds (64.5%) of the people contacted favored reasonable regulation of outdoor advertising. Less than one-fifth (19%) favored doing away with them.

During a nationwide survey on the environment, conducted by Lou Harris and Associates, once again two-thirds (67%) felt that billboards and other forms of outdoor advertising are

#### MYTH

Billboard opponents only want to see proper regulation of billboards, and are not out to "get" the outdoor advertising industry.

#### FACT

Many billboard opponents will be satisfied only with the billboard industry's total elimination. One such person wrote these words in the *Palo Alto Times Tribune*, "The billboard lobby claims that the real intention of those who oppose billboards is not to control billboard pollution but to put the billboard polluters out of business. Of all their claims this is the only one that is true."

#### MYTH

Billboards, unlike other commercial enterprises are "parasitic" because they derive their value not from the land they stand on, but from the road beside which they stand.

#### FACT

Every commercial activity which markets directly to consumers is almost totally dependent on the streets and highways which lead to it. Any business enterprise, from a Seven Eleven to a Sears, must be located on a traffic-oriented street or highway.

#### MYTH

Amortization, allowing the sign owner a grace period to permit him to recoup his investment before removing the sign without just compensation, is a fair and equitable method of removing signs.

#### FACT

"Amortization" is an accounting term used here in an Orwellian fashion to disguise what it really is — *government confiscation*, and it has been rejected on several occasions by the Congress. Say your home is now worth \$150,000. You purchased it 10 years ago for \$50,000. If the government needs it for a road project, you reasonably expect just compensation — \$150,000. However, proponents of amortization argue that since it would cost you \$10,000 a year to rent a place and your house only cost \$50,000,

if they let you live in your own house for five more years they can take it without paying you anything for your house, as it has been "amortized."

#### MYTH

The 1978 amendments to the Highway Beautification Act involving just compensation are of great benefit to the billboard industry and went far beyond the original intent of Congress.

#### FACT

The Chairman of House Committee on Public Works and Transportation made the Congress' view clear on this issue in remarks on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives when explaining the 1978 amendments:

"Madam Chairman, I believe the crux of the issue is equity. This House and the Congress as a whole have repeatedly said that individual owners must be compensated for the taking of their property. The provision in the committee bill merely reaffirms what has always been the Congressional intent."

#### MYTH

The Highway Beautification Act's requirement for the payment of just compensation for the removal of billboards is unconstitutional.

#### FACT

In 1966, U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark wrote this, in response to a request from the Secretary of Commerce:

"To repeat, I have concluded that section 131 (the Highway Beautification Act) requires every State to provide just compensation as a condition of receiving the whole amount of Federal-aid highway funds apportioned to it by the Secretary of Commerce on or after January 1, 1968, and I see no basis for concluding that this requirement is unconstitutional as to any State."

In fact, the Beautification Act does nothing more than parallel the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which requires the payment of just compensation. Government forces the elimination of private property.



• A one-time \$5 to \$100 fee based on sign size collected only upon approval of a permit application generates approximately \$25,000 of revenue per year.

• Annual outdoor advertising license fees of \$250 from companies that erect more than two signs per year generates approximately \$7,500 per year.

Under the proposed rule, only nonconforming and grandfathered signs will be assessed a fee for fiscal year 2001. This approach to structuring the applicability of the fee is designed to ease implementation of the fee process by only addressing a portion of the total signs in the first year. Collecting a fee only on nonconforming signs will allow the Department to direct their first billing efforts toward a more manageable number of signs, rather

than the entire 15,000 to 20,000 signs in the state.

The approach also works well with the limitation on generating fees for the fiscal year 2001, yet allowing for the fees to generate a more substantial portion of the total program costs in subsequent years. Approximately 5,075 nonconforming signs have been identified in Wisconsin. Collecting a flat \$100 fee on only nonconforming signs should generate approximately \$507,500 in revenue in fiscal year 2001, in accordance with the requirements of s. 9150 (3m) of 1999 Wis. Act 9.

The revenue expected to be generated from annual fees after fiscal year 2001 is \$1,015,280, estimated as shown in the following schedule:

Square Footage	Proposed Fee	Est. # of Signs	Est. Revenue FY 2002
<b>Business Area Signs</b>			
8 or less	\$ 0		
9-32	\$ 10	411	\$ 4,110
33-200	\$ 20	1,646	\$ 32,920
201-600	\$ 25	2,880	\$ 71,975
601-800	\$ 50	823	\$ 41,150
801-1200	\$ 75	823	\$ 61,725
1201 and above	\$ 100	1,234	\$ 123,400
<b>Other (all sizes)</b>			
Directional	\$ 100	1,725	\$ 172,500
Nonconforming or Grandfathered	\$ 100	5,075	\$ 507,500
<b>TOTALS</b>		<i>14,617</i> 17,652	\$1,015,280

*less 4500 Community Service Clubs*

Fees to be generated by the application fee for new signs is difficult to predict, since fewer applications may be submitted primarily since the fee will be nonrefundable, and to a lesser degree because of the fee increase. For FY01 it is expected that very few new applications would be received subject to the new application fee. The revenue generated by the application fee may approximate or perhaps be slightly less than the fees currently generated from issuance of the one time permits.

### Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The Department expects that the fee schedule established in this rule revision will have a negligible adverse impact on small businesses that use outdoor advertising as a method of advertising. They will now be required to pay between \$5 and \$100 each year for each sign they erect or maintain. The types of small businesses that erect their own outdoor advertising signs are often resorts, campgrounds, antique stores, automotive shops, etc., the majority of which build smaller signs than the standard industry signs. Small business signs are frequently smaller than 150 square feet, which will have an annual fee of \$20. Because the majority of small businesses typically own only two to six outdoor advertising signs, the annual impact is expected to be minimal. For those small businesses that are more reliant on outdoor advertising signs, the costs aspects of choosing this advertising medium will not be significantly impacted by the fees, which are relatively modest in relation to the cost of erecting and maintaining a sign or leasing sign space.

The annual sign fees that would be paid under this proposed rule, both small, independent sign companies that own approximately 20-75 billboards and large, industry sign companies that own hundreds of signs, are expected to be passed on to the advertisers. This new fee should not significantly affect the monthly lease rental rates charged by these companies for outdoor advertising and is not

expected to have an effect on sign companies that are considered "small businesses" under s. 227.114, Stats.

Because the Department does not compile or maintain records reflecting the number of employees or annual income of sign companies, establishing less stringent requirements for small businesses, as defined in s. 227.114(1)(a), Stats., is not feasible. Chapter Trans 201 does exempt businesses that erect 2 or fewer signs from the requirements of obtaining a sign company license, and this rule making would not alter that law.

This rule making proposes to exempt official, service club, religious notice signs and signs under 8 square feet in area from an annual fee requirement. Applicants for these types of signs will be required to pay the one-time \$50 sign permit application fee. The Department does not anticipate that this one-time fee will adversely affect small businesses.

Because the rule application process and annual fee billing and payment processes are relatively straightforward and simple, and because DOT district sign permit coordinators are available to assist small businesses in completing permit applications and determining whether a proposed sign site is acceptable under s. 84.30, Stats., the Department concluded further simplifying the permit process or creating different deadline dates for small businesses is unwarranted.

### Preparation and Copies of Proposed Rule

Preparation of this proposed rule was done by Attorney John Sobotik. Copies of the rule may be obtained upon request, without cost, by writing to Deborah Brucaya, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Highway Operations, Room 501, P. O. Box 7986, Madison, WI 53707-7986, or by calling (608) 266-3813. Alternate formats of the proposed rule will be provided to individuals at their request.



Date: August 30, 2001

To: Members of the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Senator Baumgart, Chair

From: Ed Lump, President and CEO  
Wisconsin Restaurant Association

Re: WRA opposition to SB 219

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The members of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association are very opposed to SB 219. If enacted, this bill would prevent the erection of new signs and remove existing signs that, in many cases, provide the very lifeblood to thousands of Wisconsin's restaurants. Without the information and directions that outdoor signs provide, many businesses would suffer, or even fail, for lack of a way to attract the traveling public.

Billboards also provide an element of safety for the traveler that cannot be overlooked. There are many areas of Wisconsin where Specific Information Signs (SIS) or Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) are not available or allowed. Conventional outdoor signs provide welcome beacons in the night for many travelers seeking shelter, gas, food or a specific destination.

If the proliferation of signs is a concern in an area, local government has the ability to control signs through zoning and ordinances. This provides enough government control.

SB 219 would not only prohibit the erection of new billboards but it also creates a grant program to eliminate existing billboards. The grants would be funded by a tax on the existing outdoor signs. **This brings a new meaning to the phrase "taxing an industry out of existence."**

In conclusion, the Wisconsin Restaurant Association asks you to refrain from passing SB 219.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Corporate Office:**

I-90/94 (Exit 108A)

P.O. Box 489

Portage, Wisconsin 53901-0489

Phone: (608) 742-9094

Fax: (608) 742-1856

August 30, 2000

Dear Legislators:

My family and I own and operate the Petro Travel Plaza located on Interstates 90 and 94, Exit 108A. We built Petro 15 years ago and rely almost exclusively on billboard advertising to market our travel plaza. Billboards are the best method to reach and inform our customers, the interstate travelers, on the services we can offer them 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Businesses like mine play a very important role not only in the collection of Sales Tax and Motor Fuel Taxes, but also in providing public safety. We offer our 400 parking spaces for tired truck drivers and traveling motorists who need to park safely while they take a break from driving. Without billboard advertising most traveling motorists would be unaware of where we are located, and therefore could not properly plan for safe parking.

In summary, Senate Bill 219 is bad public policy. It not only would significantly hurt my business economically, but more importantly could cause a great harm to public safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James L. Goetz".

James L. Goetz  
Vice President

JJG:sh

## Comments on Senate Bill 219

Richard Chenoweth  
August 30, 2001  
10:00 a.m. Room 411 South

- Thank you . . . .
- As a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I've taught a course titled "Environmental Aesthetics" for over 20 years and my particular research interest is in peoples perceptions of the landscape. I'm also a member of Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin. I'm here today, however, as a concerned citizen. I believe that the State of Wisconsin has a compelling interest in protecting its scenery. In that regard, it seems to me that if we don't already have far too many billboards in Wisconsin, we certainly have enough.
- I have followed the billboard arguments, on both sides, for about a year now. Some of these arguments have been captured in poetry:

I think that I shall never see  
A billboard lovely as a tree  
Indeed, unless the billboards fall  
I'll never see a tree at all  
-Ogden Nash

Ogden Nash may never have seen  
A billboard he held dear  
But neither did he see  
A tree grossing 20 grand a year  
-David Flint, Turner Advertising Company

- While humorous, neither of these poems capture the public policy issue facing Wisconsin and this committee today;
  - Shall we stick with the current public policy whereby the state has little to say about billboards; unlimited growth in the number of billboards statewide is okay and even if local units of government, strapped for resources, wanted to take down some billboards to improve the appearance of their locality, for all practical purposes they cannot because its too expensive.
  - OR, is it time for some modest state policy that would put the brakes on billboards and provide a fiscal mechanism so that it would be possible to eliminate some billboards if that's what local units of government want to do.

- Some might argue that billboards are not a big issue. But I would argue that billboards are an important element of the Bigger Picture for which our elected state officials ought to show real bipartisan leadership. The natural beauty of our state IS A BIG ISSUE, both from an economic and from a quality of life perspective. That Bigger Picture is how we want our state to look in the future-whether we will proactively create policies such as SB 219 that help to protect the beauty of our state, OR whether we will praise the beauty of our state all the while doing nothing to protect it by our public policies. We can just watch it being degraded, in this case, one billboard at a time.
- Governor McCallum, in vetoing the budget item that would have made it easier for billboard companies to clear vegetation along Wisconsin Highways, clearly recognized the bigger picture:
  - “Its one of the steps to make sure that we continue to protect the beauty of this state”
- As this public policy gets debated, one thing we can count on is that there will be a deluge of allegedly factual material, much of it coming from the outdoor advertising industry. Indeed, as I’ve looked at the issue over the past year, its easy to get caught up in claims and counterclaims, so much so that one can lose sight of the Bigger Picture, i.e., the state’s compelling interest in protecting the scenery of Wisconsin.
- Sometimes, when there is a blizzard of claims, a little common sense is useful:
  - Does anyone really believe that a modest proposal to manage billboards in Wisconsin is going to be a disaster for our Tourism industry? I don’t.
    - Roy Hankamer Jr., Managing Partner of Southwest Hotel Management and chairman of the International Hotel Association’s Environment Committee had this to say; “Numerous billboards along the roads leading to a hotel are a form of visual pollution. Not only are they costly, they have been rendered obsolete by new approaches to marketing.”
    - Vermont went much further than the moderate policy contained in SB 219 by banning billboards altogether. Did the tourism industry collapse? Carol King, a staffer on Vermont’s sign regulatory agency said this; “The travel industry needs to be progressive , both in marketing, and in protecting what is really at the heart of a state’s or an area’s appeal. We want a billboard-free landscape and that is what vacationers say they want when they flock here. *You won’t find a travel industry person in the state who doesn’t agree with them*” Christopher Barbieri, President of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce in 1991 said: “Vermont’s national appeal

has been significantly improved by the absence of billboards . . . You don't need billboards to attract people who are looking for a scenic alternative to urban America." Well, can the opinions of these people be trusted? Probably. Billboard-free Vermont enjoyed a 50% rise in tourism expenditures in the two years after removing its last billboard and a 10 % increase in tourists. In any event, it seems to me that if Vermont can ban billboards altogether in the interest of protecting Vermont's scenic appeal while at the same time enhancing its economic viability, surely Wisconsin can limit its number of billboards to whatever the current figure is, 10-14 thousand or so.

- One might ask what IS at the heart of THIS state's appeal and how do billboards fit into that. I think its pretty obvious, but a trip to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism might help us to understand this. I have five packages of tourist information here, one for each of the districts represented by members of this committee. There is lots of advertising in these packages, advertising that is quite useful for learning about the goods, services and attractions available in these different areas. I can chose to peruse this advertising – or not. Looking at the hundreds of pictures gives an idea of the image that each area wants to project. Each area is different as you would expect in a state with a variety of scenic character. What is common to all of these images is a LACK of billboards – not one! Anywhere! Not even in the background! I think its clear that billboards are not part of the image Wisconsin wants to project and if that's true, we should have a public policy consistent with the image we DO wish to project.
- In reading some of the literature of the Outdoor Advertising Industry, you might think that if the traveling public didn't have billboards to look at, they would run out of gas, have to sleep in their cars along the roadways or starve to death for lack of ability to find service stations, restaurants or motels. I'm not dumb enough to believe that and I'm quite confident that most of the public isn't that dumb either. Most folks plan their trips in advance, tourism promotional materials available both from the Department of Tourism as well as locally are effective, smaller directional signs along highways can serve the informational function well as they do in some other states, and it won't be too long before onboard navigational systems with information about nearby goods, services and attractions will be widespread.
- Finally, claims will be made about the importance of the billboard industry to Wisconsin's economy. Again, one can quibble about facts and minutiae to the point that we lose sight of the real issue; protecting the scenic beauty of our state. Frankly I don't know the numbers (but I know they are hard to get). The bottom line statement of Richard Lamm, former Governor of Colorado, is probably pretty much on target for Wisconsin. He said: "Billboards contribute a miniscule amount to our economic well-being, but they impose a high cost. They detract

from Colorado's attractiveness to tourists and from the pleasant surroundings for our residents."

- So, I would like to see the legislature creating public policies that actively protect the scenic beauty of Wisconsin. Although modest in its provisions, SB 219 is a good step – far preferable to the current state policy that allows unlimited numbers of billboards and provides no fiscally realistic way for local units of government to remove billboards that contribute to the visual blight of their piece of Wisconsin's landscape - if that's what they want to do.
- A final word as a citizen and taxpayer. All of the economic value of billboards, the profitability for the owners, stems directly from the public's investment in roads. That's a very good deal for the billboard industry, and a very bad one for most of the rest of us. We chose to look at most other types of advertising – or chose not to. We can flip the page, turn the channel, or just not pick up the magazine or brochure in the first place.
  - A marketing brochure from the Outdoor Advertising Association of America sums up their case for billboards : A billboard is "right up there. Day and Night. Lurking. Waiting for another ambush. It simply won't go away. It's never turned off" On this point, I find myself in total agreement with the billboard industry. I couldn't have said it better. William F. Buckley Jr. puts the same idea this way: "Billboards are acts of aggression against which the public is entitled, as a matter of privacy, to be protected."
  - Every time I see a billboard I am distracted by that billboard from paying attention to the varied, unique and scenic landscapes of Wisconsin. Afterall, that's the whole point of the billboard – it wants you to look at IT. Not only am I distracted from appreciating Wisconsin's scenery, in some cases I literally cannot see Wisconsin, because the view is blocked by billboards, more and more of them higher and higher up - and enormous.
- When the day is done, I urge you not to lose sight of the Big Picture among a bewildering array of claims, particularly the self-interested claims by the billboard industry. SB 219 is a reasonable, modest way to express through public policy the state's intention to protect what is arguably Wisconsin's single greatest asset, its scenic beauty.

## Eskeitz, Anne

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**From:** cornels@att.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 30, 2001 3:04 AM  
**To:** Sen.Baumgart  
**Subject:** SB219 for it C Hausler

In 1997, the destruction of Lincoln County started when they started building monster billboards 50 to 80 feet high. I could see billboard blight would destroy the scenic landscape of Lincoln County and the entire state of Wisconsin. In my county, I took a phone poll and 90% wanted billboards down. I went on a petition drive, with the help of many people, to stop billboard blight, collecting over 1500 signatures and 300 tourists' signatures. The tourists from all over the country and the world were more outraged and did want the scenic landscape blighted by billboards. In talking to many people that want the scenic landscape preserved, they would state that we want trees and sky not billboards. One woman was in tears. She said they trashed my sunset.

Due to lack of resources in our county and time, they could not stop billboard blight. The counties and cities in Wisconsin lack the resources to fight billboard blight, and it is out of control. Billboard blight could be very harmful to economic growth and tourism in Wisconsin. The people in the towns across Wisconsin, who take pride in their communities visual character and green and open space and want to protect their communities scenic beauty for future generations, have banned billboards. What is wrong with billboards? They endanger our health and welfare. Billboard overload causes negative mental effects and could lure minors into alcohol and gambling. They are a safety hazard and hamper economic growth, lower property values and degrade the environment. The 1996 Scenic America report shows Wisconsin one of the worst states for billboard blight. In 1996, in Wisconsin, there were 14,990 billboards and by the end of 2001 there will be 20,300 stated by the Wisconsin DOT and that does not count billboards in the cities of Wisconsin. On average, the last five years, that's over 1,000 billboards a year, and if that average continues, billboards could double to 40,000 billboards in twenty years. The last six years, the Wisconsin taxpayer will have paid three million dollars to regulate billboards and another million dollars to remove billboards. People in the state do not realize that when billboards go up, and when you have road expansion, the Wisconsin taxpayer has to pay to remove the billboards. Why do we subsidize the billboard industry when they reap huge profits and pay little taxes on the faces and no road user fees on billboards.

In the future, from my studies, we will leave a multi-million dollar tax bill to the future generations, if billboard blight continues to spread. Wisconsin has lost hundreds of thousands of trees to billboard blight. In Wisconsin, our state is anti-tree, allowing private land owners to clear cut trees and the state allowing the billboard industry to clear cut on the public right of way 500 feet for 6 seconds of advertising. On the public right of way, some of the trees were planted at the Wisconsin



taxpayers expense. Trees are the worlds natural air conditioner and give us fresh air. Trees enhance the scenic beauty and the scenic beauty has proven to heal us faster and reduce stress and stabilize ones environment. It was a sad day to see twenty, over one hundred year old oak trees, clear cut for a couple of giant billboards. Mother Nature threw everything it had at these beautiful trees. The hottest days over hundred degrees and the fifty below on the coldest days, seventy mile an hour winds, storms, floods and drought, but the old trees could not survive a couple of giant billboards.

With  
20,000 to 50,000 billboards in the state, most are lighted resulting in a great waste of energy and producing more mercury and nuclear waste. Lighted billboards can kill birds. Lighted structures kill three to five million birds a year. Reducing the bird population could be harmful to Wisconsin 900,000,000 dollar bird business. Reducing the bird population could increase mosquitoes and diseases. In scenic books, the roads in Vermont are called the glory roads. A well respected scenic journalist that travels all across Wisconsin and the country, writing on the scenic beauty, came to our county. He did not write on the beauty, but billboard blight. He called billboards the "road assassins" and he stated how great it was to travel those Northeast states where they have no billboards and those states he said do a bang up tourism business. The way he summed it up on billboards, "Study them, note the advertiser, the product, the advertisers location and hours, then never go there."

In our county of Lincoln, a grocery store used one of the tall monster billboards for over a year. When they put that billboard up, I never did go to that store again. The grocery store is now out of business. They sold out and tore the store down. In Lincoln County, 99% of the billboard ads have nothing to do with the local economy. So many people have told me that when businesses use billboards, they are not going to go there, because they are destroying the scenic landscape and this creates a negative effect on businesses and the businesses lose customers. Some of the billboards show big cars but the company making the cars will report a billion dollar loss. The billboards do not seem to be helping their bottom line, and are more distraction along the highway. The odd thing about car companies is that they will use the scenic landscape in their commercials without billboards, but they are destroying Americas scenic landscape by using billboards. If you are looking at a car billboards, there is a good chance you could be in an accident. But those fortunate enough to survive such an accident are of course potential customers for the nearest car dealer.

Billboards are a safety hazard. Even the Outdoor Advertising Association of America boasts "You can't zap it. You can ignore it." Billboards are designed to distract motorists attention from the road. Its no surprise that in 1980 the Federal Highway Administration study found a positive correlation between billboards and accident rates. Moreover, federal and state courts have cited traffic safety as a legitimate basis for billboard regulations. In one large city, they had hundreds of accidents due to a billboard of a pro basketball player, and had to remove the billboard. The states that have no billboards have only double digit death rates due to auto accidents, Alaska (76), Hawaii (98), Maine (181), Vermont (90). Compare that with

Wisconsin, that has billboards, has 745 deaths due to auto accidents. Even in our county, a billboard states, "OOPPS! You just became an outdoor advertising viewer." The billboard took my eyes off the highway and I could have killed someone while looking at the billboard. In a case in Texas, a 60 foot high sign caused an accident resulting in a 17 million dollar judgment. The driver stated he had been distracted by the 60 foot high information sign and it caused the accident that resulted in his injuries. Who is responsible if I get into an accident? The landowner that rents the land, the billboard company, the advertiser, the state that allows it, or all of the above?

#### Billboards

really create an unsafe environment that should be stopped. In our county of Lincoln, we have had twelve people killed in the last couple of years in billboard areas. Even the U.S Supreme Court has stated, "They are not oral speech but a form of expression and are subject to regulatory powers because signs take up space and obstruct views, distract motorists, displace alternative uses of land and pose other problems that legitimately call for regulations." The Wisconsin Council on Highway Safety should study these billboard areas as stated in Wisconsin Statute section 85.07 Highway Safety Coordination. It is well documented that billboards create unsafe conditions, an excellent reason for legislators to stop billboard construction. Billboards that cover public domain like lakes, rivers, streams and parks, are in violation of Wisconsin Statute Conservation section 23.095 Protection of Natural Resources (1g) General Prohibition. (No person may damage or attempt to damage any natural resource in the state of Wisconsin" This act is the tool for Minnesota to remove billboards along their lakes, like Lake Superior.

#### In

1963, Senator Gaylord Nelson stated, "The scenic landscape, as a natural resource, should be protected. He stated, "We cannot be blind. Our water and our air are becoming more polluted every day. Our most priceless natural resources trees, lakes, rivers, wildlife habitats and, SCENIC LANDSCAPE are being destroyed."

#### People are

quite concerned what messages we are putting out to children in the adult word of alcohol, gambling and smoking

The billboard industry does not care about the environment and does not care about the health and welfare of children. In Lincoln County, for about 3 years, the billboard company circled the schools with tobacco adds with smoking cartoons. They didn't care that record numbers of children were getting hooked on cigarettes, at three thousand kids a day but continued with the smoking cartoons. The highest percentage of smokers today are 18 to 24 years old. Every year 1million young people are hooked on cigarettes and 300,000 will die before life expectancy. Even in 2001, the billboard company has started covering Lincoln county with alcohol billboards that could lure children into this adult vices. We are losing so many people to drunk drivers. Every 77 minutes in the state of Wisconsin someone will be injured or killed by a drunk driver. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is totally against this type of billboard

advertising to minors. The number one drug problem among youth today is alcohol. An alcoholic counselor said, after a drunk driving teen killed two other teens, "when you advertise having fun with alcohol it could be a deadly combination."

In one story, Rev. Pfleger fought hard to keep alcohol and cigarette billboards out of his community and stated "The billboard messages, intentionally or not, entice young people to experiment with alcohol and cigarettes." He said it is a gateway to illicit drugs. You can turn off the radio or TV, but billboards are in your face twenty four hours a day every day." Rev Pfleger knows the problems and can see the effects of the cigarette and alcohol billboards on kids. A school principal states, "The billboards lure children into the world of adult vices long before they are ready to make responsible decisions on their own." Casino billboards could be luring children into the adult vice of gambling.

At the

Federal Trade Commission of Consumer Protection, Jodie Bernstein stated, "Yet, the cartoon campaign promoted tobacco that causes serious injury, addiction and death. It appeals to our young people. It is illegal and should be stopped." At the time of this article billboard companies will continue to use the smoking cartoons around our schools for another year until the US Congress ordered them down. I feel when you invite people to ride our highways, it should be a scenic ride. For people that are recovering alcoholics and people with gambling addiction, to me, the alcohol and gambling billboards would be very stressing for them, when they see them for miles and miles. There is about three hundred people a month calling for help with gambling problems in the state of Wisconsin. On a TV report, local school had trouble with strip tease billboard. The principal would not let the children out onto the nature trail due to the strip tease billboard. The teachers and parents were upset because, the billboard company would not take it down. You can see the billboard company did not care about what the children could see.

The billboard industry excepted the PETA billboard, "Got Milk Got Cancer Mayor Giuliani." This was an insult to a Mayor's illness and the dairy business. This really shows the insensitivity towards people's health and business. They would not take it down but was ordered by Governor Thompson to remove it. Every year hundreds of communities that care about preserving the visual quality and character, and health and welfare of their communities, enact tough billboard controls. Communities can thrive without billboards. Most billboards have no connection to the local economy. A five year study by the Mississippi Research and Development Center concluded "The way a community looks affects how both residents and visitors feel about the community. An attractive community has a better chance at industry and tourism.

In Williamsburg, Va., sales for eating and drinking establishments grew from 47,977,000 in 1988 to 80,595,000 in 1992 three years after billboard controls were toughened. In 1991 alone total retail rose about 44%.

In Raleigh, N.C. sales for eating and drinking establishments rose from 243,000,000 in 1989 before billboard control to 306,806,000 in 1992, after controls were introduced which is a rise of 20%. The total retail sales in Houston grew 100% from about 9,000,000,000 in 1981, the year after a ban on new billboard construction was passed, to about 19,000,000,000 by 1992. For eating and drinking establishments alone, the total rose from 908,016,000

in 1981 to 2,099,184,000 in 1992. That year, in Houston, the city council passed by a 12-3 vote of a new ordinance with amortization provisions which will further reduce the number of billboards. Billboards lower property values. A study done in Pittsburgh, PA found that property values rose as much as 255% after the removal of billboards.

When Vermont put a ban on billboards they enjoyed a 50% rise in tourism expenditures in two years after removing its last billboard.

The longest serving Governor of Colorado, Richard Lamm states, "Billboards contribute a minuscule amount to our economic well-being. They detract from Colorado's attractiveness to tourists and from the pleasant surroundings for our residents." A former California Governor stated, "When a man throws out a piece of paper from his car he pays a heavy fine." (In Wisconsin it is a 500.00 fine.) When a man throws up a billboard across a view he is rewarded. I see little difference between the damage done by these two litterbugs."

Billboards are not essential because other information alternatives exist. You have the Blue logo signs, newspapers, tourist guides, Chambers, the internet, TV, radio. Also advertisers can sponsor many events through the year. Hats, caps, shirts, signs on vehicles. I would like to appeal to advertisers to protect and preserve the scenic landscape along the highways by not using billboards for their advertising and to use these other means.

Part of the summary of the 1991 Maine Traveler Information Services Act stated, "The scenic resources are of great value, are distributed throughout the state and have contributed greatly to its economic development by attracting tourists, permanent and part-time residents, and new industries and cultural facilities.

The scattering of outdoor advertising throughout the State of Maine is detrimental to the preservation of those scenic resources and so to the economic base of the state of Maine, and is not an effective method of providing information to tourists about available facilities. The proliferation in number, size and manner of outdoor advertising is hazardous to highway users.

The policy in the state of Maine is to promote the public health, safety, economic development and other aspects of general welfare. It is in the public interest to provide tourists and travelers with information and guidance concerning public accommodations, facilities, commercial services and other businesses and points of scenic, cultural, historic, educational recreational and religious interest. To provide this information and guidance, it is the state of Maine's policy to

- 1) Establish and maintain official information centers and a system of official business directional signs
- 2) Provide official directories, guidebooks, maps and other tourist and traveler information publications
- 3) Prohibit and control the indiscriminate use of outdoor advertising
- 4) Enhance and protect the natural scenic beauty of the state of Maine."

The billboard spokesperson has called us these tree huggers. Yes, we are tree huggers. We love trees. Great men and women were tree huggers like George Washington, who took great care in planting trees and which are still growing today at Mount Vernon.

Thomas Jefferson, who would enjoy the acres of woodland gardens. The father of forestry, he would no doubt be an environmental activist today, the sort of person denounced by someone as a "tree-hugger." During his presidency he stated, "I wish I was a ruler, that I might save the noble beautiful trees that are

daily falling sacrifice to the greed of their owners.  
The unnecessary falling of a tree, perhaps the growth of  
centuries, to me is a crime little short of murder.  
Communities should be planned with an eye to the effect  
on the human spirit of being continually surrounded by  
the maximum of beauty." "And other tree  
huggers,

Theodore Roosevelt,  
who saved millions of trees in National  
parks.

Lady Bird Johnson, who fought hard for the 1965  
Beautification Act in the 60s, so billboards could come  
down to preserve the trees and natural beauty of  
Americas highways for Americas heritage and for future  
generations.

John Muir, who was raised in Wisconsin  
and went out and told people we should preserve Americas  
beauty.

Nature inspired  
Frank Lloyd Wrights architecture. These were the days  
when Wisconsin was not blighted by  
billboards.

These are great men and a woman  
that believed in preserving Wisconsins beauty, which is  
Wisconsins heritage, and part of America the  
Beautiful.

In this great capitol  
building we have great men and women. I hope they will  
preserve and protect the scenic landscape along our  
highways. We have been blessed to have such a beautiful  
state and country and there is no room to scar the  
scenic landscape with billboard blight along our  
highways. I hope and pray that this bill to stop  
billboards (SB 219) will go forward to preserve and  
protect the health and welfare of the people of  
Wisconsin and the scenic landscape along the highways of  
this great state of  
Wisconsin.

Cornel P  
Hausler Merrill WI 54452 PH 715-536-3923

## Henderson, Patrick

---

**From:** DRosenw941@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 04, 2001 9:08 AM  
**To:** Sen.Baumgart; Sen.Hansen; SenCowles@legis.state.wi.us  
**Cc:** david.rosenwasser@pmiwi.com  
**Subject:** (no subject)

Dear Senator Baumgart:

With all respect intended, I was disappointed in the manner in which the committee hearing was held to hear testimony from citizens regarding your bill on billboard advertising.

I view you as a well intended and intelligent elected official. Your position on billboards does not happen to reflect my own position on that topic, but I respect what you are trying to do and why you feel it is so important. I appreciate your enthusiasm and commitment to your position.

I drove two and a half hours own from the Green Bay in order to make some factual information heard by you and your committee members. I waited over three hours and had to leave for other commitments I could not change, so although I was the seventh person to enter the hearing room and fill out a slip to speak, I was not called in the first three hours of the hearing. You mentioned fairness is in the eye of the beholder, I disagree. There is a legal precedent to determine fairness, they are courts of equity, thus it is not in the eye of the beholder, there are standards to use as measuring tools. Fairness is the balanced approach you suggested, but why would one who arrived well in advance of the majority of the attendees be so far back in the order to be called. It makes the process suspect at best.

Well, beyond my disappointment with spending almost five hours of driving time not to be able to share with your committee some factual information, was the least of my concerns. After having heard three hours of babble, I was dumb founded to understand why people who made declarative statements that were filled with unsupported statistical data were not challenged. One gentleman spoke of his trip to Florida and how Florida was a Mecca for those who love the open vistas free of advertising. No challenge was even intimated. I lived in Florida for six years and I defy you to drive down interstates 95, 75, US 41 or other major highways in Florida and not see a much higher concentration of billboards. Have you ever been to Orlando, was it something I missed that this person failed to mention that billboard haven? I find it disturbing that he presented statement as if they were factual materials and were supportable, when instead they are not. That I think is the responsibility of the committee and its chair to question.

Next, I noted that a professor from Madison was given almost sixteen minutes to ramble on about his work and again he only supported his statements with personal opinions, not data of indisputable merit. How could an academic be so shy on real data? He spoke almost two and a half hours into the hearing and yet he was not cut off to meet the five minute suggested time line as you outlined in the beginning. He spoke longer than you, the author of the bill.

I am a proponent of the use of the free market, not anything more. If billboards were as harmful as some think, the advertisers who use them would see negative ramifications to their business and cease their use. Nobody spends money on ineffective advertising. If it was not good for their businesses, they would make the change to another form of media. I have no reason to believe that government need add more regulation to the free market. Both local and federal government have taken the lead in this area

and that is sufficient. I appreciate your concern for the environment, the beautiful vistas and beyond. I salute your efforts, but those who oppose such free market decision making only add to the burden of who should be the arbiter of taste. My wife sometimes questions my selection of wardrobe, should she decide what others view, what credential might she, you or others have to make such decisions as to whether billboards are not appropriate. None, that I know of.

On the ride home from Madison I noted along highway 151 endless homes with rusted farm equipment, old broken down automobiles, falling down barns with no paint and other less attractive items to be viewed by any passing motorist. Is it my job or yours to enforce some type of taste code on these private citizens because their property is not up to standards I feel are important? I think not.

This is not the role of government. I have never seen a billboard that caused any harm to either human, animal or vegetable. I live by a river, the Fox, that has contamination beyond belief from years of pollution our government has condoned. Please address that harmful situation first. Leave the free market to its own dynamics, please. The river, as an example, is a public asset that failed to be protected, the harm done has enormous measurable value, why not concentrate in similar areas with your efforts.

I thank you for your efforts, I am truly sorry they are misplaced in my opinion.

David Rosenwasser  
President  
Green Bay Area Visitor and Convention Bureau  
Green Bay, WI 54304  
800 236 3976

SEP 11 2001

EUGENE BASS  
301 W. Indian Creek Ct.  
Milwaukee, WI 53217

September 10, 2001

Members of the Senate Committee  
on Environmental Resources  
c/o The Honorable James Baumgart  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Committee Members:

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the hearing on Senate Bill 219 on August 30th, but I wanted to write to you to share my concerns regarding this proposed legislation.

Professionally, I own and manage about 25 apartment and commercial buildings in Milwaukee, Winnebago and Sheboygan Counties. I have outdoor advertising on only one property in Milwaukee.

Personally, I travel extensively around the midwest as well to the east coast and Florida. I find that good quality roadside signs are a welcome source of information as to what businesses and services are offered in a particular community. While traveling, I stop every couple of hours at "local service facilities" as opposed to the national chain operations. Even if they are a short distance off the road, I prefer such a stop so I can get a sense of the community I'm visiting.

As an example, our first visit to Burstadt's in Tomah, Wisconsin, came from seeing a highway sign. Now, this "restaurant and retail market place" is a regular stop each time we travel on Interstate 94-90 or State Highways 21 and 23 going west or east as the case may be.

Although I understand the good intentions of SB219, I feel that passage will take away a wonderful communication opportunity that local retailers and service providers have to "visually talk" with travelers and invite them to visit their establishments.

Accordingly, I respectfully request your voting against SB219.

Sincerely,

  
Eugene Bass



SEP 17 2007



CLEAR CHANNEL  
OUTDOOR

Dear Senator,

Additional letters for your  
review on SB 219.

Thank you.

cc: Janet Swandby

August 31, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is to voice my opposition to Senate Bill 219 and to ask you to vote against it.

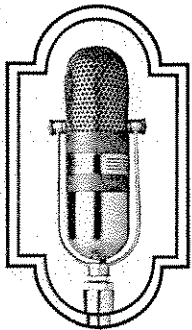
In a state like Wisconsin, known as a place where there are "different" things to do, the systematic de-construction of the billboard industry would greatly change the face of our state. With tourism being so important to our state's economy, I cannot imagine how tearing down billboards could possibly help one of our most important sources of revenue. The advertising dollars that are currently spent in the state on outdoor advertising would then be spent in cities such as Chicago and Minneapolis, further hurting local economies. Can you imagine Wisconsin Dells being the huge success (and tax source) that it is without billboards (beginning at state borders) telling thousands of consumers what to expect and where to find it?

Outdoor advertising serves a vital need in our communities, serves the public interest (seen any of the stop smoking billboards?) and helps the state economy. Thank you in advance for voting against Senate Bill 219.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Armitage", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Ben Armitage  
Concerned Citizen



Clear  
Channel  
Communications  
Incorporated

2651 South  
Fish Hatchery Road  
Madison WI 53711

PO Box 99  
Madison WI 53701

PH 608.274.5450  
FX 608.274.5521

WMAD 92.1 FM  
WMLI 96.3 FM  
WIBA 101.5 FM  
WZEE 104.1 FM  
WIBA 1310 AM  
WTSO 1070 AM

wmad.com  
star963.com  
wibafm.com  
z104fm.com  
wiba.com  
espn1070.com

August 31, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI

Re: Senate Bill 219

Dear Committee Members:

As both a business leader and a citizen of the great state of Wisconsin, I urge you to  
**vote against Senate Bill 219.**

I am a General Manager of six Madison radio stations. We serve the community as a source of entertainment and information. Our stations are also an advertising resource to businesses and the organizations, as is the outdoor advertising industry. Many types of businesses and products have deemed outdoor advertising to be a beneficial and essential part of their advertising mix. Much of this advertising serves to sell the benefits of our state to visitors who travel from outside Wisconsin's borders.

I ride motorcycles and we as a group of riders travel through new points of the state each year. The billboards and outdoor messaging is very helpful in determining where we stop off for food, lodging, gasoline, entertainment and recreation.

The Outdoor Advertising industry employs many of our citizens and plays a vital role in the State's business economy. Bill 219 is not and never has been necessary.

Please vote against Bill 219.

Sincerely,

Jeff Tyler  
General Manager  
Clear Channel Radio-Madison



August 29, 2001

Senate Committee on Enviromental Resources  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Subject: Senate Bill #219

Members of the Committee:


My name is Daniel Kruepke and I wish to go on record in  
opposition to SB#219.

I manage my parents' land rentals and presently have billboards  
on the land. These billboards do provide income for my parents  
in their retirement portfolio and would require their financial  
planning to be restructured.

As manager for this land, do the property owners not have rights  
as to what goes on their property? We do require these billboards  
to be maintained and they are landscaped so they do not provide  
any eyesore to the countryside.

I hope you will consider this and vote against this bill.

Thank you.

  
Daniel Kruepke  
5405 Woodstone Drive  
Slinger, WI 53086

September 4, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI

RE: Senate Bill 219

Dear Committee Members:

As an avid hunter, I travel throughout the state. I rely on billboards to direct me to a hot meal after a cold day in the slough. Billboards get me to the next gas and coffee break.

Even more specifically, billboard advertisements have prompted me to donate to further wetland preservation throughout the state with Ducks Unlimited. Billboards advertise a personalized license plate program with a portion of the plate fees donated to the Ducks Unlimited. This was the first and only place I was made aware of the opportunity to further help the cause!

I do not see Bill 219 as a necessary Bill ... Please vote against Bill 219.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rich Nowak', written in a cursive style.

Rich Nowak  
Concerned Citizen

September 3, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI

Re: Senate Bill 219

Dear Committee Members:

I understand that you have before you, and will be considering, Senate Bill 219. I would respectfully ask that you vote against this bill.

This legislation will have a chilling effect on the advertising community and business people throughout Wisconsin.

In a time when the business climate is softer than at anytime over the past half decade, Senate Bill 219 would negatively impact both the outdoor advertising industry (jobs), as well as the businesses that use outdoor advertising as part of their marketing campaign.

Wisconsin has worked extremely hard at creating a vibrant tourist based economy. It has been successful. With a stroke of the pen Senate Bill 219 would undo those years of hard work and measurable progress.

Please spend your precious time considering meaningful legislation for our state, not ill-conceived attacks on a legitimate industry which employs hundreds of people and generates revenue for countless businesses in Wisconsin.

Respectfully yours,

D.J. Armstrong  
A Concerned Citizen

I hope you will consider my opinion, and I urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Paulsen

2701 N.E. 10 St. Condo #106

Ocala, Fl. 34470

P.S. My property is at

10123 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Greenfield, Wis 53227

August 30, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
State Capitol  
Madison, Wv. 53702

Subject: Senate Bill #219

Members of the Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Paulsen  
and I wish to go on record in  
opposition to SB #219.

I am a property owner with a  
billboard on my property. This  
billboard generates a steady income  
to me, which is important to me  
and my family to help pay  
bills. If this bill passes, and  
the sign must come down how  
are we going to make up the  
income that we will be losing?

Don't I have any rights as to  
what goes on my property?

Over the time that I've had  
the sign on my property, no  
one has ever mentioned that the  
sign is an eyesore or anything  
else of that nature. Most  
people think the signs are  
helpful, informative and  
interesting.



August 29, 2001

Dear Senator Baumgart,

It was with shock and dismay that I learned of your proposed measure to remove all billboards in the State of Wisconsin (SB#219). As a public school teacher I served my community, always with the belief that our elected officials respected the needs and the rights of the citizens of our state. At retirement I found my fixed income did not provide sufficient funds to pay for our needed health insurance for my wife and myself. With that in mind, my wife and I, along with our adult daughter constructed a billboard with the hope that its small income would pay our health insurance premiums. Fortunately we were able to lease our billboard to a larger outdoor advertising company. That association has been a blessing to our family, as it has helped a great deal in coping with the ever-increasing health insurance costs. The company we lease our billboard to has been a most decent, friendly and cooperative partner.

Now the bill you are proposing will shatter all of that. What possible good can come from removing all of the billboards in the state? I am sure you must recognize that quite a large portion of Wisconsin's income and subsequent tax revenue accrues from the tourist industry. Billboards perform a marvelous function of promoting the tourist industry, with no expense to the Wisconsin taxpayer. In addition, billboards are entertaining, informative, and useful to the motorist in many ways. We have had numerous compliments as to the attractiveness of our billboard.

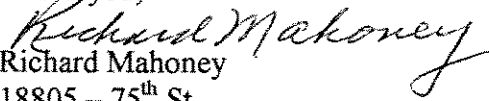
In the event your bill becomes law, are you prepared to compensate me not only for the present value of the sign structure, but also for the future income it would have produced, for surely that is a considerable part of the evaluation of the sign? Furthermore, it seems to me there is a serious question concerning the constitutionality of what you propose. I refer specifically to the first amendment of the Bill of Rights of the U.S. constitution – the right to freedom of speech.

Please consider carefully the long-term consequences of such as law. Unfortunately Wisconsin already has a reputation as a "high tax" state. Do you really believe stripping Wisconsin of billboards will promote a friendlier atmosphere to attract business that might be considering Wisconsin as their future home? The fewer businesses we have the more the tax burden rests upon the backs of the individual taxpayer, and to be blunt, the Wisconsin voter. Perhaps you are being influenced by the newspaper and radio-TV industry, as billboard advertising is a competitor with other forms of advertising. However, the function and responsibility of our lawmakers is to represent fairly and equally the interests of all our citizens. In light of the current economic situation, trying to fix something that isn't broken may prove to be both an economic and political disaster.

It seems to me that there are far more pressing issues that should demand the attention of the legislature. If your purpose is to help the average citizen against "Big Business," you may not be aware that there are many individuals who own just one billboard and lease it to a larger company.

I urge you to vote against SB#219.

Thank you,

  
Richard Mahoney  
18805 – 75<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bristol, WI 53104

Cc: Rep. Jim Kreuser, et al

August 30, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Subject: Senate Bill #219

Members of the Committee;

My name is *Arthur D. Dupont* and I wish to go on record in opposition to SB#219.

I am a property owner with a billboard on my property. This billboard generates a steady income to me, which is important to me and my family to help pay bills. If this bill passes, and the sign must come down, how are you going to make up the income that I will be losing? Don't I have any rights as to what goes on my property?

Over the time that I've had the sign on my property, no one has ever mentioned that the sign is an eyesore or anything else of that nature. Most people think the signs are helpful, informative and interesting.

I hope you will consider my opinions, and I urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you.

*Arthur D. Dupont*

Arthur - Mary J. Dupont  
N9662 Cty H  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

August 30, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Subject: Senate Bill #219

Members of the Committee

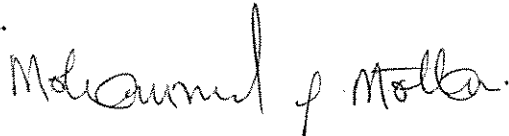
My name is Mohammad Y. Motlani and I wish to go on record in opposite to SB#219.

I am the property owner with a billboard on my property. This billboard generates a steady me, which is important to me and my family to help pay bills. If this bill passes, and the sign is taken down, how are you going to make the income that I will be losing? Don't I have any right as owner on my property?

Over the time that I've had the sign on my property, no one has ever mentioned that the sign or anything else of that nature. Most people think the signs are helpful, informative and important.

I hope you will consider my opinions, and I urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you.



Mohammad Y. Motlani  
7650 W. Appleton Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Mailing Address:  
9122 Lincoln Dr. Apt 1  
Des Plaines, IL 60016

September 4, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI

RE: Senate Bill 219

Dear Committee Members:

As an avid hunter, I travel throughout the state. I rely on billboards to direct me to a hot meal after a cold day in the slough. Billboards get me to the next gas and coffee break.

Even more specifically, billboard advertisements have prompted me to donate to further wetland preservation throughout the state with Ducks Unlimited. Billboards advertise a personalized license plate program with a portion of the plate fees donated to the Ducks Unlimited. This was the first and only place I was made aware of the opportunity to further help the cause!

I do not see Bill 219 as a necessary Bill ... Please vote against Bill 219.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rich Nowak', written in a cursive style.

Rich Nowak  
Concerned Citizen

September 3, 2001

Senate Committee on Environmental Resources  
Room 411 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI

Re: Senate Bill 219

Dear Committee Members:

I understand that you have before you, and will be considering, Senate Bill 219. I would respectfully ask that you vote against this bill.

This legislation will have a chilling effect on the advertising community and business people throughout Wisconsin.

In a time when the business climate is softer than at anytime over the past half decade, Senate Bill 219 would negatively impact both the outdoor advertising industry (jobs), as well as the businesses that use outdoor advertising as part of their marketing campaign.

Wisconsin has worked extremely hard at creating a vibrant tourist based economy. It has been successful. With a stroke of the pen Senate Bill 219 would undo those years of hard work and measurable progress.

Please spend your precious time considering meaningful legislation for our state, not ill-conceived attacks on a legitimate industry which employs hundreds of people and generates revenue for countless businesses in Wisconsin.

Respectfully yours,

D.J. Armstrong  
A Concerned Citizen

Sept. 7, 2001

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES  
STATE Capitol  
Madison, WI. 53702

Subject: SENATE Bill #219

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE;

My NAME is Kurt PRETZL and I wish to go on  
RECORD in opposition to SB#219.

I took a trip out EAST SEVERAL YEARS AGO with my  
young daughter (my wife RECENTLY died FROM CANCER) and  
I WANT to tell you it WAS so bad going thru  
those states without signs!! My daughter couldn't  
READ the maps or help me figure out where to turn  
off for FOOD - GAS - MOTEL - ETC.

I think we NEED signs.

I urge you PLEASE to vote AGAINST this bill.

Thank you,

Kurt Pretzl

FINAL DRAFT

**The Role of Billboards in the U.S. Economy**

Charles R. Taylor, Ph.D.

September 2000

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the findings of a national survey of billboard users. The study was scientifically designed so that the sample would be representative of the nation's billboard users. A mix of a wide range of types of businesses was present in the sample. Statistical analysis was applied in order to draw conclusions.

The study is designed to give insight on several issues pertaining to billboard advertising. These issues are: 1) whether businesses who use billboards would lose sales if billboards were banned; 2) whether billboards provide value to consumers and businesses; and 3) whether viable and cost-effective alternatives to billboards exist.

On the issue of lost sales, a substantial majority of the respondents reported that they will lose sales if they do not have access to billboards. More than three quarters of the businesses surveyed indicated that they would lose sales if billboards are banned. The average estimate of lost sales among these businesses was strikingly high at over 18%. This level of sales loss simply cannot be sustained by most businesses and it would be particularly devastating to many small businesses.

On the second issue, the results of this study clearly demonstrate that billboards provide value to both consumers and businesses who use billboards. Billboards include a wide variety of information that is helpful to consumers who reside in an area as well as to those visiting and passing through. Information on the location of the business, the products and/or services offered, prices, quality and convenience of offerings are commonly communicated on billboards. This finding is consistent with prior content analysis research that has found that billboards are an information rich medium and with surveys that indicate that motorists view billboards as a



valuable source of information (Taylor 1997; U.S. Travel Data Center 1991).

The information provision function of billboards is also very important to businesses. The respondents clearly indicate that the medium has unique and important benefits that help their business. When asked about various media's ability to communicate information to consumers at an affordable price, the companies rated billboards considerably higher than any other medium. Additionally, respondents cited the ability to reach a local trade area as a major advantage of billboards. These perceptions are consistent with academic discussions of advertising which state that key advantages of billboards include their low cost and their ability to reach a geographically targeted audience (Arens 1999). Such advantages are often critical to both retail businesses that serve a local market (e.g., restaurants, retail stores, banks, hospitals) and travel related businesses (gas stations, tourist attractions, hotels).

The findings on the third issue, the availability of alternatives to billboards for businesses who use the medium, paint a stark picture. The respondents to the survey resoundingly indicate that on-premise signs do not serve the same function as their billboards. Additionally the respondents make it clear that other media, including television, radio, newspaper, magazines, flyers, and the internet are not substitutes for their billboards. This finding was especially pronounced among small businesses. When asked to rate various media in terms of its ability to bring in new customers, the billboard users surveyed rated billboards considerably higher than any alternative. Similarly, billboards were rated highest in terms of their ability to increase sales.

## **Summary of Key Findings**

- More than three quarters (76.9%) of the businesses sampled report that they would lose sales if they did not have access to billboards.
- Of those businesses reporting that sales would decrease, the average estimated decrease in sales is 18%. For all businesses included in the study, the average estimated sales decrease is 14.5%.
- As an advertising medium, the businesses surveyed report that billboards have unique advantages that cannot be duplicated by other media alternatives. Additionally, no other medium was found to be a close substitute for billboards.
- Respondents rated billboards substantially higher than any other advertising medium in terms of its "ability to communicate information at a price you can afford."
- Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that billboards serve a different function than their on-premise sign.
- Billboard users use the medium to provide a variety of types of information to consumers.
- Both large and small businesses who use billboards report that restrictive regulations would be damaging to their business. However, the impact of restrictive regulations would have an even more adverse effect on small businesses than on large businesses.